

METHODOLOGY

2005 Nebraska School Administrator Survey

Conducted by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System

General Information

To better understand the environment related to health within Nebraska middle and high schools, the Nebraska Health and Human Services System (NHHSS) sampled (via mail) school administrators of public middle and high schools in Nebraska between December 2004 and March 2005.

The Tobacco Free Nebraska (TFN) Program took the initial lead on the project, and coordinated all of the data collection. The Nebraska CVH Program provided assistance in compiling and/or developing cardiovascular related questions to include on the survey and weighted the final data set.

The survey targeted Nebraska school administrators of public middle and high schools (containing any of grades 6-12). Survey topics covered primarily environmental supports and policies within the school related to tobacco, physical activity, and nutrition.

The methodology behind this study is very similar to the methods used to conduct the Nebraska School Health Education Profile Survey (SHEPS). SHEPS is administered through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with much of the work being completed by WESTAT (the CDC contractor for the project). Nebraska has conducted the SHEPS every even calendar year since 1996. More information about SHEPS can be obtained from the following address
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/profiles/>.

Description of Questionnaire

There were a total of 59 questions on the survey, with many questions having multiple components. The questions on the survey were specific to the following topics: 25 tobacco; 9 nutrition policies and environment; 9 physical activity policies and environment; 6 secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease; 5 attitudes toward obesity, physical activity, and nutrition; 4 demographic; and 1 asking if the school had a health advisory committee.

Some of the questions on the survey came directly from validated studies, such as the SHEPS, while some of the questions were developed by staff within the NHHSS and tested for validity using an expert panel.

Target Population

The survey was targeted at public middle and high school principals of schools with at least 10 students.

Sampling and Data Collection

Public middle and high schools in Nebraska were included in the sample. The sample used in this study was the same sample of schools used for the 2004 SHEPS study (which used systematic random sampling with equal probability of being selected). Schools with alternative programs, those designed for students with behavioral problems, and those containing a total of less than 10 students were removed from the original sampling frame. The sample consisted of 350 schools.

To ensure an acceptable response rate, multiple mailings, followed by telephone calls, were made to school principals. The initial cover letter and survey were sent to 350 school principals on December 21, 2004 by the State TFN Program. The second round of surveys was sent out on January 20, 2005 to schools that had not yet returned a completed survey. In mid-February 2005, telephone calls were made to each principal from the non-responding schools, requesting completion of the survey. Data collection stopped on March 4, 2005, where a total of 293 surveys were obtained.

Response Rate

During the data collection process, the State TFN Program received 293 completed surveys from the schools. However, four schools responded twice to the survey. As a result, only the first survey was kept, while the second survey was removed from the database. This left 289 surveys in the database.

In addition, there were five schools that indicated they had only students in grades six or less (meaning they were elementary only schools). As a result, these records were removed from both the database and from the original sampling frame (because they were ineligible). Removing these five schools left 284 in the final database.

The final response rate for the study was 82.3 percent, where there were 284 out of 345 (eligible schools).

Respondents

The survey was targeted at school principals of public middle and high schools in Nebraska. However, some individuals who completed the survey were non-administrators (including nurse, teacher, administrative assistant, etc.), while some were superintendents rather than principals.

As a result of this discovery, all respondents were left in the analysis for questions relating to school policies or environmental structures. However, when looking at questions on attitudes, non-administrator respondents were removed from analysis (thus the attitude responses reflected only school administrators).

Weighting

Data were weighted, by the State CVH Program, to reflect all public middle and high schools during the 2004/2005 school year. To weight the data, the State CVH Program followed the SHEPS weighting methodology (contained in a weighting document prepared by WESTAT). The two primary steps in the weighting process consisted of non-response adjustment (to remove potential bias due to non-respondents) and post-stratification adjustment (to improve the precision of the estimates). Post-stratification consisted of weighting the data by school type (middle, high, and combined schools), school enrollment (small, medium, and large), and school locale (rural and urban).

Analysis

Data were analyzed using SAS Version 9.1 and SUDAAN Version 9.0.

Demographic Analysis

Results were analyzed overall, as well as by school type and three urban/rural categories (referred to as location in the reporting of the results). The school type consisted of middle school, high school, and combined school. Middle schools included both traditional middle schools (usually containing grades 6-8) and junior highs (usually containing grades 7-9).

The National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data (CCD), categorizes each public school nationally into one of eight locale categories (which looks at the population size around where the school is located). The list for Nebraska schools was obtained from the CCD, and each school in the sample was designated a locale category (that matched the locale within the CCD database). To maintain an adequate sample within each category and still be able to report results by urban/rural, the eight CCD categories were collapsed into three. These three categories consisted of: 1) city (schools located within metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) that are either located within a city or on the fringe of a city); 2) town (schools located within large or small towns located outside an MSA); 3) rural area (schools within rural areas located within or outside an MSA).

Analyzing Results by Student Population

To look at student population within each school, student population data for the 2004/2005 academic school year were obtained from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDOE) website, available at the following address <<http://ess.nde.state.ne.us/DataCenter/DataInformation/DataDownloads.htm>>.

These records contained population by individual school and grade level. Student population for grades seven and higher was entered into the survey database for each school that responded to the survey. This information allowed for the analysis of results by student population, in addition to school population.

There are two distinct, yet important ways to view the results: 1) percentage of schools that may have a policy, environmental support, etc for health promotion, and 2) percentage of students within these schools containing a policy, environmental support, etc for health

promotion. For example, if 50 percent of schools in the state had policy X, but nearly all of the states largest schools had this policy; it would be possible that a greater percentage, say 75 percent of all students in the state, may be attending a school that has policy X.

Reporting of Information

Fact sheets as well as detailed tables were created to report the findings. Detailed tables for physical activity, nutrition, administrator attitudes toward physical activity and nutrition, and heart disease and stroke supports were created. Tables include information overall as well as by school type and school location.

Results within the detailed tables include the sample size, weighted percentage, and 95 percent confidence interval. For some of the key indicators, both the school and student percentages are reported.

This document was prepared by the Nebraska Cardiovascular Health (CVH) Program. For additional information about this study, contact the Nebraska Cardiovascular Health Program or the Tobacco Free Nebraska Program at 402-471-2101.



NEBRASKA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM

